GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
DEFENCE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:4469
ANSWERED ON:22.08.2001
FIRE ACCIDENTS OF JABALPUR ORDNANCE DEPOT
VIRENDRA KUMAR

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) the reasons for the recent fire in Jabalpur Ordnance Depot;

(b) the extent of losses incurred in that Ordnance Depot;

(c) the reasons for enormous increase in fire accidents in Ordnance Depots; and

(d) the steps taken to curb such fire accidents?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI U.V. KRISHNAM RAJU)

(a) to (d): A Statement is attached.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (d) OF LOK SABHA UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 4469 22.8.2001.

1. There was a minor ammunition related accident, in the Laboratory, located in Ammunition Technical Area, (ATA), of the Central Ordnance Depot, (COD), Jabalpur, on 6th August 2001, at approximately 2.30 PM.

2. Unserviceable ammunition, which was being broken down prior to its disposal, ignited, resulting in some of that unserviceable ammunition, containing pellets, incendiary in nature, igniting. The activity of breakdown of unserviceable ammunition does involve degrees of such risk. That is why it is undertaken in a Laboratory.

3. There was no loss to life. The fire was localized only to the ammunition laboratory. It was brought under control within half an hour.

4. However, to ascertain the exact cause of fire and also to assess the actual loss incurred due to this fire, a Court of Inquiry has been ordered, which is under progress.

5. There were three incidents of fire in Army Ordnance Depots in the last three years as per details given below:-

Sl.No.	Name of Unit	Date of Occurrence
1.	Central Ordnance Depot, Kanpur	28 May, 2000
2.	Ordnance Depot, Shakurbasti, New Delhi	3 June, 2001
3.	Central Ordnance Depot, Jabalpur	6 August, 2001

6. Courts of Inquiry in respect of Ordnance Depot, Kanpur has been completed.Courts of Inquiry in respect of Ordnance Depot, Shakurbasti, New Delhi and Central Ordnance Depot, Jabalpur are in progress.

7. As per findings of the Courts of Inquiry in respect of Central Ordnance Depot, Kanpur, the cause of fire could not be conclusively established. The possibility of sabotage/arson, though not established, has not been ruled out. The inquiry report has recommended corrective administrative action.

8. Following steps have been taken to prevent occurance of such fires in Ordnance Depots in future:-

(i) All depots have been directed to update safety and security instructions.

(ii) All depots have been inspected by a Board of Officers to check adequacy of safety and security arrangements.

(iii) Shortages in fire fighting equipment are being made up and defective equipment repaired.

(iv) Unserviceable ammunition is being disposed off on priority.

(v) Allotment of additional funds for creation of more storage accommodation, for shifting ammunition presently stored on open plinths under canvas to Explosive Stores Houses.